

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application and the same are rejected. By this Amendment, claims 1-6, 8-13, and 15-19 are amended. Accordingly, claims 1-20 remain in the application and are presented for review and further consideration by the Examiner.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Mastie et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,498,656. (Examiner's Action, page 2, ¶ 1).

Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Mastie discloses a rule based selection criteria for controlling print job distribution. Print jobs are routed to one of a plurality of printers or print queues. After providing a print job, a set of printers capable of printing the print job is determined. The set of printers is queried to determine status information thereon. Block 31 of Figure 3 represents the printer manager 6 querying the printers 12a, b, c, d in the system 2 to determine the status of the printers, including the queue depth, reuse capability, etc. (col. 7, lines 57-60). A criterion is then applied to the status information for the set of printers to determine a subset of printers. The criterion may involve a queue depth rule to optimize load balancing. The determined subset is dependent upon the determined status information. A printer is selected from the subset and the print job is routed to the selected printer.

Mastie does not disclose tracking utilization information for each output device. Tracking the utilization information, by definition, requires that the utilization information be kept track of, as a trend. Mastie does not disclose keeping track of utilization information, as a trend. Mastie only discloses using current status information, such as print queue depth. Therefore, Mastie does not disclose tracking historical utilization information for each output device.

In order to further clarify that the utilization information is not current information, but rather historical information, Applicant has amended the claims

to make explicit that the utilization information is historical. Mastie clearly does not disclose tracking or analyzing historical utilization information.

In contrast, Applicant's independent claims 1, 8, and 15, as amended, include wording that a historical utilization information is tracked and analyzed for optimization opportunities and a network configured to exploit the optimization opportunities found in the analysis of the historical utilization information. As Mastie does not disclose these limitations, Mastie cannot anticipate Applicant's claims.

In view of Applicant's arguments and amendments with respect to independent claims 1, 8, and 15 being allowable, Applicant respectfully submits that the remaining dependent claims are also allowable because they contain all of the limitations of their respective independent claims and further add structural and functional limitations.

The foregoing amendments and arguments are believed to be a complete response to the most recent Examiner's Action.

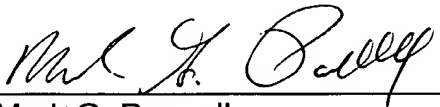
No new matter has been added.

It is respectfully submitted that there is no claim, teaching, motivation, or suggestion in any of the cited art, alone or in combination, to produce what Applicant claims.

It is further submitted that the application, as amended, defines patentable subject matter and that the claims are in a condition for allowance. Such allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

Should any issues remain which would preclude the prompt disposition of this case, it is requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned practitioner by telephone.

Respectfully submitted,
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Date 11/30/2004
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